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**For immediate release**

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## Public Health Week and New Ogallala Office

**McCook** – Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) celebrated Public Health Week and its employees last week during the National Public Health Week recognition event. Staff members celebrated by attending the Public Health Association of Nebraska (PHAN) annual conference.

“National Public Health Week reminds Nebraskans to live healthier lives. Public health has three key messages: promote, protect, and prevent. Promote healthy behaviors. Protect your health. Prevent chronic diseases and injuries,” states Myra Stoney, SWNPHD Director. “During National Public Health Week, we celebrate our work and educate the public about the role of public health officials.”

Public health activities are designed to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent the spread of disease, and protect the health of the entire population. In southwest Nebraska these activities are being accomplished at three office locations: the main office in McCook, a satellite office in Imperial, and a new Ogallala office located at 314 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street, in the west end of the ESU 16 office.

“We are excited to offer COVID testing and vaccinations at our Ogallala office,” states Lori Rowley, RN, Program Manager for the Ogallala office. “We have two types of rapid Covid tests, QuickVue antigen tests and Accula PCR tests, that can be used for travel or treatment. Covid vaccines are available for those 12 years and older. We can also do blood pressure checks and educational presentations for community groups that are interested in promoting healthy lifestyles.”

The same antigen and PCR COVID testing is available at the SWNPHD McCook office as well. Antigen tests look for cells in the body that are used to fight a SARS-CoV-2 infection and are used most often when a person has symptoms of COVID-19. PCR tests look for the presence of the virus itself in the body and are more accurate for a person who does not currently have symptoms. Health insurance or private pay is required for this testing; free home test kits are also available at both locations.

Sign up for a COVID-19 testing appointment at <https://registernmytime.com/tw/swnphd>. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby’s) in McCook and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223. The website [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties.

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